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## Senate Votes Bill to Stop Reporters, Others From Identifying U.S. Intelligence Agents

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter.

WASHINGTON—The Senate moved to crack-down on journalists who disclose the names of U.S. intelligence agents.

In an important test vote, the Senate approved, 55 to 39, an amendment by Sen. John Chafee (R., R.I.) that would make it a crime, punishable by a fine and imprisonment, for a journalist or any citizen to disclose the names of government agents working undercover abroad.

The Senate is expected to complete action on the bill this week, setting the stage for a conference with the House, which has passed legislation that goes further than the Senate.

The prohibition is strongly supported by the Reagan administration and the Central Intelligence Agency. It is as forcefully opposed by much of the press and civil liberties groups.

The catalyst for these measures has been

the activities of CIA critics, such as Philip Agee, who have systematically sought to disclose the identities of U.S. agents overseas. The critics argue that many of the agents' activities are illegal. The CIA and its congressional supporters say the disclosures have impaired the effectiveness and endangered the lives of some agents.

Under the Chafee measure, anyone who disclosed the name of an undercover agent and had "reason to believe" that the disclosure would impair intelligence operations could be prosecuted. If convicted, that person could be fined up to \$1,500 and sentenced to three years in jail for each offense. This was much tougher language than another version that would have required prosecutors to show that those identifying the agents had an "intent to impair or impede" intelligence activities.

Sen. Chafee said his was a reasonable approach. He said it was his opinion that the bill pertains only to disclosing the names of agents engaged in legal activities and that anyone engaged in an illegal act—for instance, an assassination attempt—wouldn't be protected by this provision. Moreover, unlike the House-passed bill, the Chafee amendment doesn't apply to the naming of former CIA officers or agents or of U.S. citizens serving as informers.

But many newspapers and journalism associations, as well as constitutional scholars, insist the Chafee amendment is unconstitutional. They argue it threatens First Amendment freedoms and might allow the prosecution of a journalist for disclosing information about improper domestic activities.

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